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PU50098
Customer No. 24498

CLAIMS

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1. (currently amended) A method of enhancing network utilization for a user coupled to the network via a receiver; wherein
said network is operated by a network operator, wherein the network offers both standard video content programming and enhanced video based content programming where such enhanced video programming is user interactive, and wherein

a plurality of content providers provide the enhanced content programming over the network controlled by said network operator; and

said network operator controls communications between said plurality of users and content providers as to prevent the transmission of content from a content provider if such a content provider is non-authorized;

the method comprising the steps of:

monitoring each of a plurality of user transactions between the receiver and the plurality of content providers, wherein said monitoring step is performed by said network operator;

extracting transaction information from at least a portion of said plurality of user transactions, wherein said extracting step is performed by said network operator;

storing said extracted transaction information in a data base controlled by a third party;

forming a user profile based on a combination of at least a portion of said extracted transaction information;

identifying particular enhanced content programming based on said user profile; and

providing the user with an option to view said identified particular enhanced content programming if said particular enhanced programming is from an authorized content provider.

2. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein said portion of said plurality of user transactions from which transaction information is extracted are those user transactions that have been finalized by the user.

3. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein said extracted transaction information is based on criteria set by the network operator.

4. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein said extracted transaction information is based on criteria set by the user.

5. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said extracted transaction information is based on criteria set by a third party other than said network operator.

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6. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein said extracted transaction information includes goods or services category information.

7. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said user profile is formed automatically if a pre-existing user profile for a particular user was not present after two or more after a minimum number of user transactions have been monitored.

8. (original) The method of claim 7, further comprising the step of periodically updating said user profile.

9. (original) The method of claim 7, further comprising the step of continuously updated said user profile.

10. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein said providing step is performed in response to the step of receiving a user request for said particular enhanced content programming.

11. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said providing step is performed in response to the steps of requesting specific enhanced content programming, said requesting step performed by the user, wherein said particular enhanced content programming is substituted for said requested specific enhanced content programming in response to an instruction by said network operator.

12. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said providing step is performed in response to the step of requesting specific enhanced content programming, said requesting step performed by the user, wherein said particular enhanced programming is provided in addition to said requested specific enhanced content programming in response to instruction by said network operator.

13. (currently amended) A method of enhancing network utilization for a user coupled to the network via a receiver, wherein
said network is operated by a network operator, ~~wherein~~
said network offers both standard video content programming and enhanced video based content programming where such enhanced video programming is user interactive, and ~~wherein~~
a plurality of content providers provide the enhanced programming over the network controlled by said network operator; and
said network operator controls communications between said plurality of users and content providers as to prevent the transmission of content from a content provider if such a content provider is non-authorized, the method comprising the steps of:

monitoring each of a plurality of user transactions between the receiver and the plurality of content providers, wherein said monitoring step is performed by said network operator;

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extracting transaction information from at least a portion of said plurality of user transactions, wherein said monitoring step is performed by said network operator;

storing said extracting transaction information in a data base controlled by a third party;

forming a user profile based on a combination of at least a portion of said extracted transaction information; and

tailoring at least a portion of the enhanced content programming based on said user profile as to provide the enhanced content programming from at least one authorized content provider.

14. (original) The method of claim 13, further comprising the step of providing the user with an option to view said tailored enhanced content programming.

15. (original) The method of claim 14, further comprising the step of providing the user with said tailored enhanced content programming, wherein said providing step is performed in response to the receipt of a user request for said tailored enhanced content programming.

16. (currently amended) A network-based system for providing enhanced network utilization, the system comprising:

a network providing both standard video programming and enhanced video based content programming where such enhanced video programming is user controlled;

a plurality of content providers providing said enhanced content programming and the network prevents the transmission of at least one of standard and enhanced programming from an unauthorized content provider and the transmission of said programming that has been prevented comes from an authorized content provider from plurality of content providers in response to an instruction from said network;

a receiver coupled to said network, said receiver capable of receiving said standard programming and said enhanced content programming, said receiver capable of interacting with said plurality of content providers; and

a third party controller coupled to said network, said third party controller comprising:

means for monitoring information flowing between said receiver and said plurality of content providers;

means for extracting transaction information from said monitored information;

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means for combining at least a portion of said extracted transaction information to form a user profile;

a data base for storing at least a portion of said extracted transaction information and for storing said user profile;

means for distinguishing enhanced content programming corresponding to said user profile; and

means for identifying said distinguished enhanced content programming to said receiver.

17. (original) The network based system of claim 16, wherein said distinguished enhanced content programming is complementary to said user profile.

18. (currently amended) The network based system of claim 16, wherein said receiver is at least one selected from the group consisting of a set top boxes, a telephones, a personal digital assistant (PDA)s, and a computers.

19. (currently amended) The network based system of claim 16, wherein said network is at least one selected from the group consisting of cable, fiber optics, telephone lines, terrestrial broadcast systems, and satellite broadcast systems.

20. (original) The network based system of claim 16, further comprising a display coupled to said receiver for displaying both said standard programming and said enhanced content programming.

21. (original) The network based system of claim 16, further comprising means coupled to said receiver for a user to modify said user profile.

22. (original) The network based system of claim 16, further comprising means coupled to said receiver for a user to input a set of criteria to be used by said third party controller to determine what information to extract from said transaction information.

23. (original) The network based system of claim 16, further comprising:

a network operator for controlling said network; and

means for said network operator to input a set of criteria to be used by said third party controller to determine what information to extract from said transaction information.

24. (original) The network based system of claim 16, said third party controller further comprising means for discriminating between initialized transaction and finalized transaction information, wherein said portion of said extracted transaction information used to form said user profile is said finalized transaction information.

25. (original) The network based system of claim 16, said third party controller further comprising means for periodically updating said user profile.

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26. (original) The network based system of claim 16, said third party controller further comprising means for continuously updating said user profile.

27. (original) The network based system of claim 16, said means for monitoring information further comprising means for detecting triggers within said enhanced content programming.